

STATINTL

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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
Washington 25



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March 18, 1952

Mr. S. P. Wilson, Authorized Certifying Officer
Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine
Agricultural Research Administration
Department of Agriculture
Post Office Box 989
Gulfport, Mississippi

Dear Mr. Wilson:

Reference is made to your letter of March 4, 1952, requesting decision whether you may certify for payment the voucher therewith enclosed insofar as it claims reimbursement for the cost of a telegram. The voucher is in favor of Manning S. Yeomans and covers generally travel expenses for the month of February 1952. The telegram in question was sent by Mr. Yeomans, apparently from Tifton, Georgia, where Yeomans was on official business, to Julian Mikell, 4 Halsey Street, Charleston, South Carolina, and reads as follows:

"Will arrive late Thursday afternoon. Please reserve room."

Following this telegram, Yeomans proceeded to Charleston on official business arriving there 6:00 p.m., Thursday, February 7.

Paragraph 44 of the Standardized Government Travel Regulations, to which you refer, includes in the definition of per diem in lieu of subsistence "telegrams and telephone calls reserving hotel accommodations." In decision of October 30, 1943, B-37399, it was held by this Office that telegrams reserving hotel accommodations stemming from arrangements for official conferences and necessary in expediting official business may be paid from available appropriated funds. See also, B-54082, November 30, 1945; B-72065, January 14, 1948, 24 Comp. Gen. 583, and 30 id. 389.

Upon the present record, this Office is unable to state definitely whether reimbursement for the telegram is authorized as that would depend upon the official necessity of notifying Julian Mikell of the time of Mr. Yeomans' arrival in Charleston. If such notice eliminating that part of the request to reserve a room, is administratively determined as official and necessary, then the request for reserving the room may be considered merely incidental thereto and reimbursement authorized. However, if it be determined that the notice of arrival was not necessary and that the primary reason for the telegram was the request for room reservation, the cost of the telegram would come within the definition of per diem in lieu of subsistence and may not be reimbursed in addition to the per diem payment. The voucher is herewith returned.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) LINDSAY C. WARREN
Comptroller General
of the United States

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